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MEMORANDUM FOR: Joseph Nye, Jr.
Assistant Secretary of Defense
for International Security Affairs
Office of the Secretary of Defense

FROM: Roger Z. George
National Intelligence Officer for Europe

SUBJECT: Macedonia and UNPROFOR

1. [REDACTED]

At the moment, Skopje's attention is riveted on growing internal tensions between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians over the "university" issue in Tetovo, which has had the effect of driving Macedonia closer to Serbia in its quest to insure that Kosovar Albanians and those in Macedonia do not link up.

2. [REDACTED]

Skopje is not convinced that fighting in Croatia and Bosnia will spill over into Macedonia. Frankly, they do not buy the broader Balkan war scare; they see problems in Kosovo and Macedonia as quite separate from what happens in other republics of the former Yugoslavia. From this vantage point they tend to draw a number of conclusions:

- The continuation and visible US role in UNPROFOR Macedonia is far more important than its size or combat capability per se. [REDACTED] that ending the UNPROFOR operations in Croatia and Bosnia will not have a domino effect on the separate "preventative" mission of UNPROFOR Macedonia. In their view, an increased force should not dilute the "US

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factor," introduce too much multilateralism that will complicate coordination, or invite in some national forces that could aggravate Skopje's "even-handed" approach toward all neighbors (e.g., they would not necessarily welcome German, Greek, Turkish, or Russian forces that would appear to favor or irritate some neighbors over others).

- The UNPROFOR presence is less desired as a deterrent of blatant Serbian aggression (which most Macedonians think highly unlikely now) than a symbol that the West will protect the independence of Macedonia from all neighbors (including the Greeks). In lieu of full diplomatic relations, the US presence is primarily a precious political symbol rather than a military capability. Many officials would choose full diplomatic relations over a larger US force presence. Major assistance to critical infra-structure projects like a new East-West rail line would be similarly important for both political and economic reasons.
- Modest "Plussing Up" of the force would not be opposed provided it was not massive or considered as a military challenge to the Serbs. At the moment, Skopje's relations with Belgrade are improving;

3. The real threat facing Macedonia is an uprising in Kosovo that unleashes a massive wave of ethnic Albanian refugees across their borders (which they cannot seal). The Gligorov Government has not wanted to think or plan for this contingency, because it would be seen domestically as unsettling the social peace between its own ethnic Albanian minority and the Macedonian majority. Accepting the more or less permanent settlement of several hundred thousand "radicalized" Albanians would cause a backlash among Macedonians throughout the country. In the absence of their own planning, the current UNPROFOR force might quickly have to evolve into a "Provide Comfort" mission aimed at temporarily housing refugees away from current population centers and then insuring that they were able to return.

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4. While it is impossible to predict whether a Kosovo uprising will occur in the near future, most analysts believe the current stalemate cannot be maintained indefinitely. If an "intifada" were to start in Pristina, the UNPROFOR operation might become the basis for a large scale humanitarian operation:

- Current Observation Posts (OPs) might be useful collection points for refugees, which could channel refugees into less populated areas where tent cities could be erected quickly.
- Able Sentry could become the major logistics point for supporting settlement areas.
- A UNPROFOR presence, particularly one with a major US component, would be seen as a more honest broker among the Government, the refugees, and the ethnic Albanian minority in Macedonia. It would also insure that Athens would not feel obliged to intervene to stop the refugees from crossing into Greece. (A sure way to start an Aegean conflict).
- In a worst case, UNPROFOR forces might be called on to restore "law and order," if the influx of refugees added to existing inter-communal tensions and led to rioting. The small Macedonian security forces would be unable to handle wide-spread disorder and would probably be seen as less than neutral by Albanian communities.

5. All of these considerations lead to the conclusion that a large combat force introduced into Macedonia might not be the solution to the most likely problems -- namely, internal ethnic tensions, growing economic scarcities, and a regional neighborhood that doubts Macedonia's staying power. Aid programs to assist painful privatization and reduce Skopje's North-South economic dependencies are also critical to the long-term viability of Macedonia. When balanced against the cost of a possibly large US deployment in Macedonia, modest economic investments (in the neighborhood of several hundred million dollars) and full diplomatic recognition would seem more economical, although not politically easily.

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